

CHAPTER 8. NEXT STEPS IN SRWRS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter summarizes next steps, challenges, and tentative schedule for continued development of the SRWRS.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE SRWRS

The SRWRS has completed the first two phases of plan formulation, namely, Initial Analysis Phase and Initial Plans Phase. During these two phases, the first four of six steps in SRWRS development were completed, as described in **Chapter 5**:

1. Identifying the existing resource conditions and future water supply reliability needs (without implementation of a project) of each cost-sharing partner
2. Defining water resources problems and opportunities to be considered in the SRWRS
3. Developing objectives for formulating alternatives and associated planning criteria and constraints
4. Formulating potential solutions (alternatives) to meet the identified objectives while satisfying the planning criteria and constraints

The SRWRS also has developed and implemented a strategic plan for public outreach and involvement during study development. The public was able to participate through individual briefings, study updates at major milestones, information posted on the project Web site, and individual communications.

Next Steps

In the remaining two phases of plan formulation (Alternative Plans Phase and Recommended Plan Phase), development of the SRWRS will focus on actions related to the last two of the six steps:

5. Evaluating and comparing potential effects of these alternatives, including accomplishments in meeting objectives, resulting water supply and environmental impacts, and economic considerations
6. Recommending a plan for implementation based on comparing the alternatives

Refining findings and public outreach and involvement, as in the previous four steps, would continue during the last two steps to ensure overall consistency and integrity. Tasks to be performed during the current Alternative Plans Phase will include the following:

- Evaluating alternatives for accomplishments in meeting the planning objectives
- Refining engineering design for each retained alternative
- Assessing environmental impacts and economic considerations for each retained alternative
- Preparing BAs and a draft PR/EIS/EIR
- Continuing public outreach through newsletters, briefings, workshops, and other activities
- Selecting a preferred plan and finalize PR/EIS/EIR with recommended actions

In the final phase of SRWRS development, the Recommended Plan Phase, efforts will be made to complete ESA consultation, continue public involvement and agency coordination, and finalize a PR/EIS/EIR. The technical information developed will be used for decisions associated with the preferred alternative. These decisions include, but are not limited to, a Federal ROD for the SRWRS and separate resolutions of the cost-sharing partners, necessary contract amendments and/or exchange agreements between cost-sharing partners and Reclamation, and permits necessary for diversion and/or construction from SWRCB and other regulatory agencies.

Potential Federal Role in Project Implementation

The preliminary findings of SRWRS indicates that local water purveyors are potential beneficiaries of a Sacramento River diversion, but that Reclamation's potential interest in a Sacramento River diversion is limited because this region has sufficient water rights and contract entitlements to meet projected future demand. However, a Sacramento River diversion could promote other Federal interests that could be realized in other ongoing programs and projects, as described in **Chapter 4**.

Considering limited Federal interest in water supply plans evaluated in the SRWRS, the cost-sharing partners have requested Reclamation to consider the following Federal administrative actions for implementing a Sacramento River diversion:

- Including an additional point of delivery at the selected Sacramento River location in PCWA's CVP contract for delivery of up to 35,000 AF per year
- Entering into an exchange agreement with PCWA to receive water released from the MFP to Folsom Lake, and to provide an equal amount of water for SSWD's and Roseville's diversions at the selected Sacramento River location

Note that constructing a Sacramento River diversion for Sacramento to divert its senior water rights on the Sacramento River does not require Reclamation approval or actions.

The aforementioned Federal actions are within the delegated authority of a regional director and require no subsequent or additional authorization from Congress. However, if deemed beneficial, implementation of the joint SRWRS-ABFSHIP Elverta Diversion Alternative would require additional Federal decisions on consolidating diversion capacity of a Federally supported project with a local diversion project. This particular action may require additional congressional authorization. Therefore, continued consideration of potential Federal involvement in project implementation is recommended.

CHALLENGES IN THE CURRENT PHASE OF SRWRS DEVELOPMENT

Challenges exist in the current Alternative Plans Phase for all aspects of SRWRS development, including institutional, engineering, environmental, and public outreach. Primary challenges fit in three categories:

- Coordinating with the ABFSHIP
- Determining baseline conditions and associated environmental impact assessments
- Complying with authorizing legislation

List of Key Agencies for Study Coordination

California Department of Boating
 California Department of Fish and Game
 California Department of Transportation
 California Environmental Protection Agency
 California Reclamation Board
 Natural Resources Conservation Service
 NOAA Fisheries
 Reclamation District 1000
 Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency
 State Lands Commission
 State Historic Preservation Office
 State Water Resources Control Board
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Coordination with ABFSHIP

Coordinating with ABFSHIP is a necessary component of the SRWRS due to the close vicinity of planned diversions for these two projects. During the SRWRS scoping process, the public also stressed the importance of coordinating development and reducing confusion in purposes and plans associated with these two projects.

ABFSHIP is currently preparing environmental documentation and has recently completed the final design for consolidating five existing agricultural diversions along the Sacramento River into two diversions. With the earliest implementation date in 2005, implementation of ABFSHIP would be staged by focusing on construction of the Sankey Diversion first if funding is not fully available.

It is anticipated that implementing the plan recommended in the SRWRS would be financed by locals without expectation of Federal funding. Possible earlier implementation in this scenario would allow the opportunity of constructing a consolidated diversion if deemed beneficial to environment and regional planning.

The format of coordination between the SRWRS and ABFSHIP is a result of collaborative efforts among Reclamation, regulatory agencies, and local water purveyors. The major attributes of this coordination are summarized as follows:

- The SRWRS and ABFSHIP will maintain independent projects.
- The SRWRS will include alternatives for a consolidated diversion to accommodate SRWRS needs and the ABFSHIP-planned capacity of 165 mgd (210 cfs) at Elkhorn.
- For a consolidated diversion, the SRWRS will include only components necessary to accommodate the function of a 165 mgd (210 cfs) Elkhorn diversion. The purpose of NMWC's capacity needs and diversion requirements, planned Sankey and Elkhorn diversions, and other canal improvements will not be evaluated in the SRWRS.

Before deciding on the merit of a consolidated diversion, regulatory agencies would evaluate the benefits of a consolidated, joint SRWRS-ABFSHIP diversion when information becomes available.

Determination of Basis of Comparison for Environmental Impact Assessments

A basis of comparison for environmental impact assessments under NEPA, CEQA, and ESA requirements will be developed through consultation with Reclamation and regulatory agencies. Because of differences in regulation requirements, compliance with these laws could require the SRWRS to develop different bases of comparison for decision-making. Developing these conditions and associated environmental impact assessments is especially challenging for the SRWRS due to the following factors:

- The cost-sharing partners have several ongoing major construction projects; effects of these projects on the environment due to facility construction and operation have been disclosed. Necessary mitigation measures have been identified in environmental documents and associated BOs and construction permits. Projects include the following:
 - Sacramento's expansion of its Fairbairn WTP on the American River and Sacramento River WTP on the Sacramento River below the American River confluence. Expected completion dates for both projects are in 2005.
 - PCWA's construction of a permanent ARPS on the North Fork American River near Auburn. The expected completion date is in 2007.

- Reclamation is currently proceeding with CVP Long-Term Contract Renewal efforts. Progress was furthered by recent completion of the OCAP ESA consultation. Reclamation has recently released the draft documentation for the American River Unit contracts, which are the most relevant to the SRWRS. Relationships between the SRWRS and the Long-Term Contract Renewal efforts and OCAP consultation are summarized as follows:
 - PCWA's CVP contract, considered in the SRWRS, is one of many CVP long-term contracts considered in the American River Unit EIS and OCAP. The assumed point of diversion is at Folsom Dam. Therefore, the EIS developed by the SRWRS is for supporting Reclamation's decision on approval of adding a Sacramento River diversion to PCWA's CVP contract.
 - The Placer-Sacramento region has other CVP contractors, including Roseville, SJWD, SCWA, City of Folsom, SMUD, and NMWC; however, these CVP deliveries are not the focus of surface water development under the SRWRS.
 - Sacramento has water rights on the American and Sacramento rivers that are senior to those of the CVP. Reclamation has a settlement agreement with Sacramento to guarantee Sacramento's diversions of up to 245,000 AF per year from the American River and 81,800 AF per year from the Sacramento River. The priority of water rights would need to be recognized and reflected in the environmental impact assessments. In other words, Sacramento's development of additional surface water supply within its water rights would not require approval from Reclamation.

Compliance with Authorizing Legislation

SRWRS development will fully comply with the authorizing legislation, especially Subsections (a)(5) and (c), which were of particular interest during the scoping process.

Subsection (a)(5)

The authorizing language states the following:

SEC. 103. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a feasibility study for a Sacramento River, California, diversion project that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement among the members of the Sacramento, California, Water Forum dated April 24, 2000, and that considers—

...

(5) the potential to accommodate other diversions of water from the Sacramento River, subject to additional negotiations and agreement among Water Forum signatories and potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River....

The diversion for Sacramento fully conforms to the WFA. Based on the WFA, Sacramento will take advantage of its unique position of having water rights on both the American and Sacramento rivers to facilitate diversion reduction on the American River during Hodge Flow conditions, and capture forgone diversions from the Sacramento River. Sacramento could have initiated a separate environmental review process for these diversions, but decided to participate in the SRWRS to further enforce the regional approach and collaboration envisioned by the WFA.

The diversion for Roseville from the Sacramento River, although based on exchange of its existing contract entitlements on the American River, is not included in the WFA, and Roseville is currently in discussions with the Water Forum Successor Effort on this issue. Results from the SRWRS will be used to help determine the merits of the proposed diversion for Roseville.

Through continued public outreach activities, the SRWRS will coordinate and communicate with the potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River and beyond. Results of the SRWRS feasibility study and environmental review will be used to strengthen additional negotiations and agreements with the potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River to comply with Subsection (a)(5).

Subsection (c)

The authorizing language states the following:

(c) Water Supply Impact Alternatives. – The study authorized by this section shall include a range of alternatives, all of which would investigate options that could reduce to insignificance any water supply impact on water users in the Sacramento River watershed, including Central Valley Project contractors, from any delivery of water out of the Sacramento River as referenced in subsection (a). In evaluating the alternatives, the study shall consider water supply alternatives that would increase water supply for, or in, the Sacramento River watershed. The study should be coordinated with the CALFED program and take advantage of information already developed within that program to investigate water supply increase alternatives. Where alternatives evaluated are in addition to or different from the existing CALFED alternatives, such information should be clearly identified.

Environmental review also will be an important part of the SRWRS feasibility study, as directed in the Reclamation Manual, Directives and Standards CMP 05-02, which stipulates that feasibility studies should:

- Include additional data collection and analyses to develop and consider a full and reasonable range of alternatives.
- Include such items as identification of present and future conditions, identification of problems and needs, evaluation of resource capabilities, formulation of alternative plans, analysis and comparison of alternatives, and plan selection.
- Be normally integrated with compliance under NEPA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, ESA, National Historical Preservation Act, and other related environmental and cultural resource laws. These activities should proceed concurrently with a feasibility study and culminate in an integrated PR and NEPA compliance document. Feasibility studies also should comply with State (in this case, CEQA), tribal, and local environmental and cultural resource laws and ordinances, as appropriate.

Through this environmental review, potential impacts of the alternatives will be identified, and mitigation for the significant environmental effects of the recommended project will be proposed and documented in the EIS/EIR.

It is envisioned that, depending on the outcome of model simulations and other aspects of impact analysis, the language in Subsection (c) may call for additional considerations by Reclamation beyond the requirements of NEPA or CEQA to increase water supply for CVP contractors and other water users in the Sacramento Valley. These considerations will be included in the draft and final PR, prepared in conjunction with the EIS/EIR, with identified options to reduce to insignificance any significant water supply impact on water users in the Sacramento River watershed, and/or increase water supply for the Sacramento River watershed. These options would be derived from ongoing programs and studies such as the CALFED Program and projects for Phase 1 Implementation of the CALFED ROD, and SVWMP. The final decision(s) of Reclamation will incorporate these additional considerations.

STUDY SCHEDULE

The four phases of SRWRS development are roughly divided into two study phases for administrative purposes. Phase 1 covers the Initial Investigation Phase and Initial Plans Phase, focusing on alternative development, preliminary screening, and public involvement and outreach strategies. Phase 2 covers the

Alternative Plan Phase and Recommended Plan Phase, emphasizing preparation of the feasibility report and environmental documentation. A tentative study schedule is shown in **Figure 8-1**. SRWRS completion is currently expected to span more than 3 years with a tentative completion date in 2006. The schedule is subject to revision to reflect progress in study development and agency consultation.

Depending on the final determination of necessary Federal involvement in project implementation, Reclamation would consider submitting the **Final PR/EIS/EIR** to Congress, as directed by the study authorization.

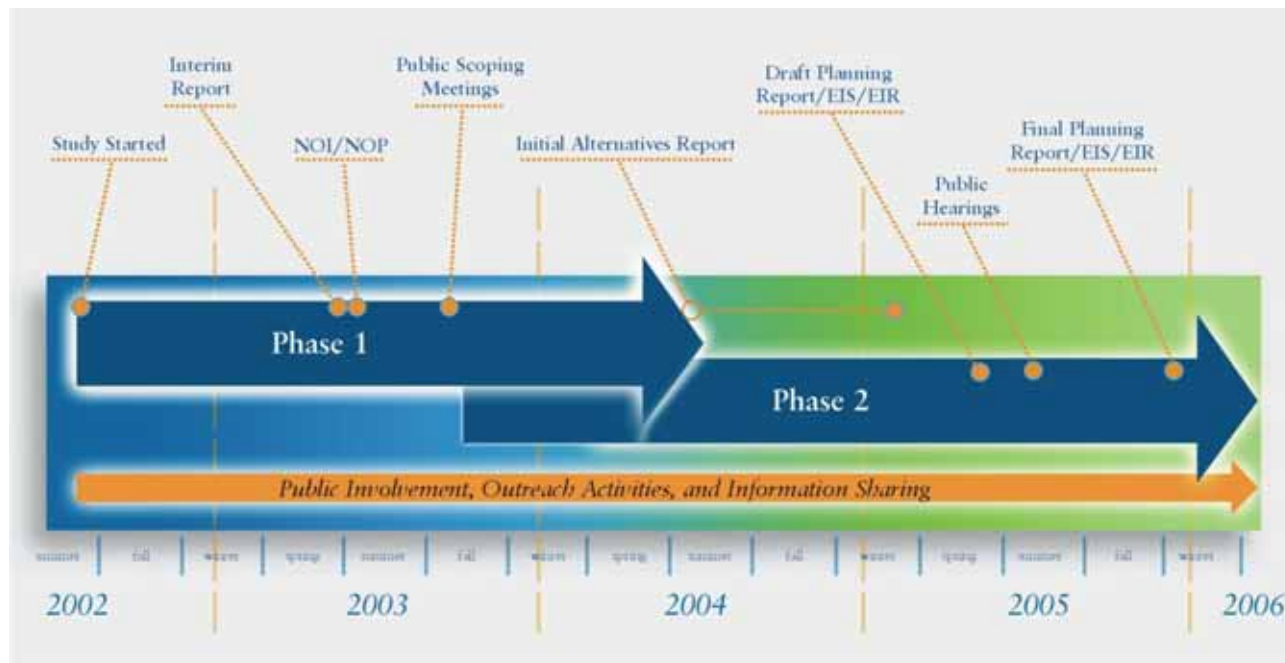


Figure 8-1. Tentative Schedule for SRWRS Development